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# THE MENACE OF BIBLELESS SCHOOLS

By Clarence H. Benson*

Instruction and education are terms that seem synonymous, but in application are in reality widely different. The word "instruction" comes from *instruere,* which means to furnish, or provide. Instruction then, means the imparting of information or knowledge. "Education," on the other hand, comes from *educo,* meaning to lead out; to develop, cultivate, or expand and strengthen. It may also be that the word "education" is derived not from the Latin *educere,* to lead out, but from *educare,* to rear, to bring up. Education thus presupposes instruction, for there can be nothing drawn out which has not been previously put in, nothing developed which has not previously been implanted.

Modern schools are laying great stress upon the leading-out process of their teaching. Child psychology is the handmaiden of modern pedagogy, which places the child rather than the book in the center. But this child-centered program, unfortunately, has been over-emphasized and misapplied to such an extent as to become a serious menace to efficient teaching. Enthusiasts for a child-centered program of teaching have sometimes gone so far as to disapprove of anything savoring of definite and systematic instruction. They insist that pupils must be left free to develop progressive types of thought, and some even go so far as to recommend

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that the teacher should refrain from telling the child anything, leaving him to find out largely from his own experience.

Without discussing the merits of such unbalanced use of the developing method in secular education, let us state at once that it cannot be substituted for instruction in the religious realm. The distinguishing fact of biblical religion is the approach of God to man, and therefore primarily an implanting rather than a developing. Revelation presupposes capacity for reception, but it also presupposes ignorance. "All scripture is profitable for instruction" suggests that the content of Scripture must first be implanted before it is serviceable and applicable, or rather before "the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The mistake of so many religious educators to-day is that they *presuppose* biblical instruction which has never been provided. They are vainly endeavoring to draw out from the child what has never been implanted, to cultivate a seed that has never been sown.

Since time immemorial the three fields of Bible instruction have been the home, the school, and the church. It is in the home children get their first and most enduring ideas of God. Not so much in the street as in the family. Not so much at school as from the mother. Not what they hear in church, but what they see in their father. It was Addison who said that an ounce of mother is worth a pound of law.

But, alas, we have little if any Bible taught in the American home to-day. The Bible admonition to "teach these things to thy sons and to thy son's sons" is little heeded by the great majority of our citizens. A nation to-day which leads the world in divorce is not likely to afford many homes where religious training will have its proper place. The intensive life of the American people, with father in business and fraternities, mother in clubs and politics, is not conducive to furtherance of home training. During the Colonial period the Bible was used every day in the average home. The child was taught to respect the Bible. Indeed, historians agree that the Bible was the universal child's book of that day. But these conditions are all changed. One of our leading educators recently said, "That the Bible no longer holds the place it once did in the home of English-speaking men and women, is a proposition that hardly needs proof."

Six years ago the school teachers of New York City discovered 860,000 children without any knowledge of the Bible and void of all sense of right and wrong because there was not a vestige of Bible or Bible teaching in their homes. To-day the chief textbook of the home is the sensational newspaper, and the

child's chief educator the vice, vulgarity, and violence of the movie. The movie has a dangerous fascination for the impressionable mind of the child, and yet to-day we are told that one week's attendance at the movies is five times what will congregate at all our churches and Sunday schools. Not only does the child attend the movie five times more frequently, but he learns five times more rapidly than in the Sunday school. Most Sunday school teachers from lack of training use the ear gate in their instruction, while the movies use the eye gate, and the laws of psychology declare that a child remembers 10 per cent of what he hears, but 50 per cent of what he sees.

How much Bible do we provide for our boys and girls in the public schools? Our public school curricula provide 80 per cent for intellectual growth, 17 per cent for character building, and only 3 per cent for spiritual development. The contribution of the public school, then, is almost exclusively intellectual, and the tragedy of it all is that the Bible, which prompted our fathers to inaugurate the public school, has to all practical purposes been eliminated from its curriculum. The Puritans felt that reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic were essential for a knowledge of the Scriptures, but to-day we are teaching the three R's without any recognition of their relationship to religion. Not that I would advocate the teaching of religion in our public schools. Under our present system of government it is undoubtedly better for Church and State to be kept separate. But it is well for us to recognize that at no other time, or in no other country, is the home and the school contributing less toward religious instruction than in America at the present day.

One would suppose that with the burden of religious education now resting almost exclusively on the church, it would regard this work of primary importance. But non-Catholic churches have never taken religious education seriously. While they believe so fervently in secular education as to devote forty-seven cents of every local tax dollar to the public school, they have been content to contribute only two cents of every church dollar for religious instruction. And to make matters worse, many of those who are awake to the place religious education should be accorded in the work of the church, are laboring under the strange delusion that the Bible need no longer occupy the center of the curriculum, or that a thorough knowledge of its content need be the first objective of Christian education.

This was first manifested by the action of the International Council of Religious Education in its revision of the Standard

Training Course. In the first Standard Course (1910) twenty out of fifty lessons, two out of five, were devoted to Bible instruction, while in the revision of 1915, thirty out of 120 lessons, or only one out of four, were so devoted. A still further reduction of Bible content was made in a later revision, which led Dr. Brown, in his *History of Religious Education in Recent Times,* to remark, "Bible content material was practically eliminated from the course outlined on the assumption that this was being adequately presented in the graded lesson" (p. 154). Now as it happens, the graded lessons originally provided twice as much material as the Uniform lessons. And this explanation might have been satisfactory had not the International Council of Religious Education in 1924 recommended that the Bible *no longer* form the entire lesson material for the Sunday school lessons, but that the curriculum be broadened to include literature on prohibition, law observance, world peace, social hygiene, and other kindred subjects.

The denominations therefore revised their lessons to comply with this recommendation and the added suggestion that the lessons be made child-centered rather than Bible-centered, so that today the church, instead of providing for the famine of the Word of God already prevailing in the American home and school, *is actually minimizing its study and supplanting its time-honored place.* And a Bibleless training course and Bibleless Sunday school lessons have resulted as disastrously to the church as the Bibleless home and the Bibleless school have to the nation. Even in the few years since these changes have been made the denominations that have followed the recommendation for less Bible in the Bible school are experiencing marked loss in accessions to membership and gifts to benevolences.

The first reaction to the present trend in religious education was the Bible institute movement. These institutions, scarcely known in a former generation, have within recent years sprung up all over the country, one institution alone numbering 17,200 students in its day, evening, and correspondence schools. When D. L. Moody founded the great school that bears his name it was with the one object that the Christian lay worker might *know* the Bible as well as *use* it. His school addressed itself first of all to implanting a thorough knowledge of the workers' textbook, and to this day, despite the fact that there are eighty-six subjects taught, everything in the curriculum gives way to the Bible. Nearly one-third of the General Course (1,260 hours) is devoted to Bible study, and all students are required to take some Bible in addition to their other subjects. Even students trained in our theological seminaries have

added this course of intensive Bible study, and more than one graduate has testified that whereas he found the seminary training useful for getting his pulpit, the Bible institute contribution had been helpful for keeping it.

Another reaction to the present trend in religious education was the formation of the Evangelical Teacher Training Association. The action of the International Council of Religious Education in reducing the Bible requirements to one-sixth of the Standard Leadership Course, gave rise to the prevailing protest that "the present trend in teacher training is preparing students to teach anything, without giving them anything to teach." Bible institutes, already devoting hundreds of hours to Bible instruction, did not feel this criticism could be applied to them. It was only natural that leading schools of the United States and Canada should unite to form the Evangelical Teacher Training Association, the main object of which is "to promote a course that will give adequate instruction in Bible, Personal Evangelism, and Missions." This Association, now composed of fifty-one schools, not only raises new standards in curriculum content, requiring for its Standard Training Course 140 hours of Bible and 288 hours of methods, but it introduces a new pedagogical standard by requiring its students to pursue their studies in academic classrooms. The Evangelical Teacher Training Association is the first to adopt both the academic curriculum recommendation of twenty-four semester hours and the academic resident requirement as the standard for its teacher's diploma.

Modern educationalists have made a mistake in thinking that expressional methods could be improved by changing the content of the lessons. It rests largely in the training of the teacher whether the child is to be instructed or educated. There is no question that a better trained teacher will mean better acquisition of the truth by the pupil, as well as appropriation and application. But of course the teacher can neither instruct nor educate if he has not been adequately taught himself, and only such a well-balanced program of information and expression as is offered by the Evangelical Teacher Training Association will meet the demand to-day for teachers who know their Bible just as well as they know how to teach it.

A third reaction to the present trend in religious education has been the return to Bible-centered lessons. In the light of the foregoing facts it is hard to understand why we have permitted anything but the teachings of the Bible in the Bible School. If we are to conduct Bible classes in Bible Schools it is certainly logical to

conclude that the Bible is to be the textbook and that every lesson must center in it. This was the program of the Bible School in Christ's day. That it was Book-centered and not child-centered is evident from the fact that the Bible School was called "the House of the Book." So completely did the Jewish teacher center his instruction in the Book that in comment on this characteristic the Hellenistic-Jewish philosopher Philo said, "The Jews look on their laws as a revelation from God, and they are taught in these holy laws, so to speak, from their swaddling clothes, by their parents, masters, and teachers." The Jews did not contribute science, philosophy, or literature to the world's knowledge. Their only contribution was religion, and yet that religion which so impressed this Jewish writer was the religion of the Book.

From the time that our American public schools were established by the Puritans in 1636, until the great *New England Primer* was printed in 1680, the Bible was the sole textbook of the public school. The great *New England Primer* held its place in our public schools for 150 years, and contributed more than any other book, besides the Bible, to the molding of those sturdy generations that gave to America its liberty and its institutions. Eighty-five per cent of this great American textbook was Bible. Therefore we find in the history of our nation from 1636 until as late as 1840 a large portion of the instruction of our American boys and girls was Bible.

Thus it has come to pass from the days that the Bible has declined in the home and the school, the moral and religious life of the American people has likewise deteriorated. To take the Bible out of the Sunday school lessons is perhaps the most serious mistake that could be made, as it would remove the last link of the chain of Bible instruction, which more than anything else has made America great.

This situation has been sensed by the classes in Curriculum-Making in the Christian Education Course of the Moody Bible Institute. For the past eight years they have not only been mastering the principles of curriculum-making, but have made a critical examination and comparison of all existing curricula. To meet the needs of the present day they have had for their major project the preparation of a new course which gives comprehensive, consecutive, and complete instruction in the Bible.

The All Bible Graded Series is an effort to put the Bible back into the Bible School. An examination of the lessons selected in forty-six years (1872-1918) by the International Uniform Lesson Committee indicates that only 35 per cent of the Bible was utilized, and that certain portions were taught repeatedly to the entire

neglect of others. The All Bible Graded Series utilizes 74 per cent of the Bible in its Primary, Junior, Intermediate, and Senior lessons, and 100 per cent of the Bible is covered in the synthetic Scripture survey of the Elementary Training Course of the Evangelical Teacher Training Association recommended for the Young People's department.

These lessons conform with the psychological and pedagogical laws which govern the development of the child and adolescent. The Bible is unfolded to the school boy with the same care that mathematics is developed in his elementary and high school training. Each lesson has been chosen with the greatest care and will be found to fit precisely into the needs and understanding of the growing child. The manuals of the All Bible Graded Series are written for the purpose of making the teacher a real *educator,* and the pupils real Bible *students.* Most lesson helps, unfortunately, have been a substitute for the text itself, and in many Sunday schools Bibles are not in use at all. These manuals are *guides* to Bible study, and will be especially appreciated by pastors and teachers who are eager that their pupils should "search the scriptures" and become independent investigators of the Book of books. Moreover, the teacher training course with which the series concludes, constitutes not only a recapitulation of the entire body of instruction, but such pedagogical methods as are most vital and practical for the teaching ministry.

# WILLIAM RITTENHOUSE, 1644-1708

## First Mennonite Minister in America

By Harold S. Bender

The first permanent Mennonite settlement in America was established in October, 1683, at Germantown near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, by a few Mennonite families from Crefeld, north of Cologne, in northwest Germany, of Dutch extraction. During the following twenty-five years, up to 1707, a total of about twenty-five Mennonite families arrived from the same general section of Germany, most of them from Crefeld. At first the few Mennonite families met with the German Quakers of Germantown for divine service. By 1685, however, they had separated, and had their own services, although the Mennonites were without a preacher. In 1688, while there were yet only between six and ten Mennonite families in Germantown, two new families arrived from Amsterdam, Holland, Dirck Keyser, a silk merchant, and William Rittenhouse, a papermaker. These two, together with several new families from Crefeld, brought new life to the small Mennonite group, and insisted that a congregation be organized, with a minister and deacon. In the year 1690 this was done, William Rittenhouse being chosen minister, and Jan Neus of Crefeld, deacon. These two were the first ordained men in the Mennonite church in America, being chosen to serve a Dutch-speaking congregation of not more than ten families, with probably twenty members, which met in the home of one of the members.[1]

The newly ordained preacher, William Rittenhouse, although he came from Amsterdam, Holland, had been born in 1644 at Broich in Westphalia, Germany, not far from Mülheim on the Ruhr, the son of George Rittenhouse and Maria Hagerhoffs. According to tradition, the family was engaged in paper-making in Europe. At an early age, about the year 1665, William Rittenhouse was married (his wife's name is unknown), and had three children, Nicholas, Gerhard, and Elizabeth. Nothing is known of his early life or activity until he appears on the records of the city of Amsterdam as having become a citizen of that city on June 23, 1678. He signed the citizenship papers, as "Willem Ruddinghysen of Mülheim, paper-maker" (translated).

He next appears in the records in Germantown where he is said to have arrived with his family in 1688. In 1690, following

[1] See the author's extensive article, "The Founding of the Mennonite Church in America at Germantown, 1683-1708," in the January, 1934, issue of the Review for a thorough account of the Germantown settlement.

his trade, he built the first paper mill ever established in the American colonies, which supplied the paper for the press of William Bradford, the first printer in both Pennsylvania and New York. William Rittenhouse and his son, Nicholas, shared ownership of the mill with several other partners until 1705, when the Rittenhouses secured full ownership. The mill was located on a branch of the Wissahickon Creek in what is now Fairmount Park, Philadelphia. It was carried away by a spring freshet in 1700, but rebuilt at once, and remained standing until torn down in 1891 by the city, which purchased the property in that year for park purposes. The mill remained in the Rittenhouse family apparently for more than a hundred years. It is of interest to note that William Penn issued a personal appeal for funds to aid in the rebuilding of the mill after its destruction in 1700.

Of the activities of William Rittenhouse as the first Mennonite preacher in America very little is known. It seems that he read his own sermons, or read other sermons from books, and naturally used only the Dutch language. He asked for ministerial help, and in the year 1702 was given the assistance of two newly-ordained preachers, Jacob Godschalk, and Hans Neus. Neus, however, withdrew within a year because of strife with one of the lay-members. In the same year that the two new preachers were ordained, land was given for a meetinghouse and burying-ground, but Rittenhouse never lived to see the church built, since he died in February, 1708, about seven months before the first log building was erected.

It seems that Rittenhouse was somewhat hesitant about proceeding to administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, and consequently a request was made to the Mennonite Church at Hamburg, Altona, Germany, in 1702 to send a bishop across the ocean to the young church to ordain a bishop.[2] However, the request was not granted and Rittenhouse was advised to go ahead and administer the ordinances without ordination as a bishop. He did not wish to do this. By 1706, however, the matter became very urgent since there were candidates for baptism. Rittenhouse therefore wrote again to Europe for advice, addressing a letter to the leaders of the Mennonite Church in Amsterdam. The reply came back as before that he should proceed. He was now fully resolved to do this, but fell ill and died February 18, 1708, before he could carry through his purpose.[3] The surviving minister, Jacob God-

2 See the letter in "An Interesting Document in the Early History of Germantown" in the October, 1931, issue of the REVIEW.

3 See the author's article, "Was William Rittenhouse the First Mennonite Bishop in America" in the January, 1933, issue of the REVIEW.

schalk, therefore performed this ceremony for the first time in America, baptizing eleven men and women in May, 1708. Before this baptism the membership consisted of thirty-four baptized adults.

The only other incident known of preacher William Rittenhouse is that relating to the preparing of an English translation of the Dortrecht Confession of Faith. Jacob Godschalk, in a letter of September 3, 1708, addressed to the Mennonite ministers of Amsterdam, Holland, refers to this matter in the following language (translated): "Our aged friend and preacher, Willem Rittinghuyssen, wrote to New York to have the articles of faith printed in English because there are people here who call themselves Mennists who would like to have our articles translated into English. But they asked so much our congregation could not raise it."[3] Godschalk's request for help from Holland met with success, for in 1712 the English translation of the confession was printed at Amsterdam for use in America. It is worth while remarking here that the Mennonite Church in America probably owes the adoption of the eighteen articles of Dortrecht as her confession of faith to William Rittenhouse and the Crefeld-Lower Rhine immigrants who constituted the first Mennonite Church in America, since the later Swiss and Palatinate immigrants to Lancaster and Franconia had not adopted the Dortrecht Confession in Europe.

As mentioned above, William Rittenhouse died February 18, 1708, at the age of sixty-four, leaving a widow and three married children. He was probably buried in the Germantown Mennonite burying ground although this is not definitely known as no stone marks his grave. He had been a Mennonite minister for 28 years, 12 of these years the only Mennonite minister in America.

His oldest son, Nicholas Rittenhouse, who continued the manufacture of paper at the Rittenhouse mill after his father's death, was ordained a preacher at Germantown some time before 1725, possibly in 1712 when Jacob Godschalk moved to Skippack, and served as preacher till his death in 1734. His name appears as one of the signers for Germantown to the Confession of Faith when it was ordered printed in 1725 by the first Mennonite conference in America. Nothing is known of his activity. His descendants continued to furnish members by the name of Rittenhouse to the Germantown Mennonite Church for many generations, two having been on the building committee when the new church was built in 1770. Apparently few of the descendants of Gerhard, the other son of William Rittenhouse, remained in the Church.

One of the sons of Nicholas Rittenhouse, Henry, moved to

Worcester township and on October 6, 1739, granted by deed two lots to the "Mennonist Society" for the purpose of building a meetinghouse and schoolhouse, and locating a burying-ground. This is the location of the present Worcester (Methacton) meetinghouse. The present Rittenhouses who are members of the Mennonite church, particularly at the Plain Congregation in Montgomery County, are descendants of Henry Rittenhouse. Some readers of this article are probably acquainted with J. C. Clemens, minister at the Plain Meetinghouse, whose wife's maiden name was Rittenhouse, who is a descendant of Henry Rittenhouse and through him of William Rittenhouse, the first Mennonite preacher in America.

It is regrettable that so little is known of the life and work of the first Mennonite preacher in America, but we must be content with what is known. Some fifty years ago the story was started by a careless historian that William Rittenhouse was the first bishop in America, but there is apparently not the least foundation in fact for this story, which would be greatly to his discredit, since we know definitely that he baptized no one even though there were candidates for this important ordinance.[4] We must probably recognize Jacob Godschalk as the first Mennonite bishop, who filled that office ably and well for over fifty-five years until his death in 1763, being during the entire time after the death of Rittenhouse in 1708, the head of the Skippack-Franconia conference district.

It is of interest that a son of Mathias Rittenhouse, the brother of Henry and son of Nicholas, and therefore a great-grandson of Preacher William, became one of the greatest astronomers, scientists, and mathematicians of colonial America. His name was David Rittenhouse, and he was born at the old Rittenhouse homestead on the Wissahickon in 1732. David Rittenhouse was also first treasurer of the state of Pennsylvania, serving from 1777 to 1789, and first director of the United States Mint, having been appointed in 1792 to that position by President George Washington. Although all his paternal male ancestors were Mennonites, David Rittenhouse himself apparently never became a member of the church. His father Mathias is said to have left the church in which he was reared and allied himself with the Quakers, although definite information on this point was not available.

NOTE: Daniel K. Cassel's *A Genea-biographical History of the Rittenhouse Family* (Philadelphia, 1893) furnishes some information about William Rittenhouse, which was used for this article, but not all of Cassel's material is reliable.

[4] See the article on this question mentioned in footnote 3, where a full discussion and proof is to be found.

# THE COLONIZATION OF THE GERMAN MENNONITES FROM RUSSIA IN THE PARAGUAYAN CHACO*

By Dr. Walter Quiring

The decision to colonize the Mennonite refugees who had fled from Russia into Germany in November and December, 1929, in the Paraguayan Chaco was taken at the beginning of the year 1930 in the United States. The Mennonite Central Committee, representing all the Mennonite relief organizations in the United States, had appointed a study committee in a session held in Chicago Illinois, December 11, 1929, which was to study the problem of finding a location to colonize the refugees. Six weeks later on January 25, 1930, this committee reported the findings of its investigation to a general meeting of representatives of Mennonite relief committees in Chicago. The committee recommended that the refugees should be colonized in the Paraguayan Chaco. A colony of Mennonites from Canada with over eighteen hundred souls had already been established there in the years 1927-1928 and reported that it was satisfied with its location, and this was considered a proof by the committee and the meeting that it was possible to colonize successfully in this hitherto wholly undeveloped territory. There were other reasons also which led the group to favor the Chaco. In the first place, the colonists were granted absolute freedom of conscience and freedom from military service. They were also granted freedom from tariffs and taxes for ten years. In the second place, the Paraguayan government opened its doors wide to admit the sick and crippled among the refugees without examination, something which no other country was willing to do. Furthermore, the Chaco had unlimited capacity to receive immigrants.

On the basis of the report of the study committee which relied in the main on an official report of the American consul in Asuncion, John B. Faust, and another report by two Mennonite missionaries in the Argentine, Bishop T. K. Hershey and Pastor Amos Swartzendruber, together with a statement from the Canadian Mennonite leaders in the Chaco who reported that they were well satisfied and did not intend to move, the Chicago meeting decided

* Translated from the German.

unanimously to undertake at once to settle the refugees who were then in Germany in the Chaco. The study committee could not know that Faust had visited the Chaco only once in a pouring rain, merely rode through two villages, Gnadenfeld and Weidenfeld, and that in the main he relied upon data which was placed at his disposal by the Corporacion Paraguaya, the owner of the land. The report, in particular that portion dealing with the marketing possibilities for the colony, was for that reason, as it may be imagined, not altogether thorough or reliable. Hershey and Swartzendruber had visited the colony in February, 1929, that is, when the colony was not yet a year old and had failed to touch the important question of market in their report altogether. Otherwise both the Faust and Hershey reports contained much valuable information.

In order to secure funds to finance the transport and settlement of 2,000 refugees in the Chaco, a campaign was inaugurated to collect funds in all the Mennonite churches in the United States. This campaign in a comparatively short time produced the substantial sum of approximately $100,000.

At the end of January, 1930, Professor H. S. Bender of Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, was sent as agent and representative of the Mennonite Central Committee to Germany to conduct the necessary negotiations with the German government and the refugees regarding the settlement in Paraguay and to purchase equipment for use in the Chaco and arrange for the actual transport thither. The colonists were to be equipped with the necessary household goods and agricultural implements and were to be supported for one year in the Chaco by the Mennonite Central Committee.

At the beginning of March, 1930, G. G. Hiebert of Reedley, California, who had already given service in the famine of 1921-1922 in the work of the American Mennonite Relief in South Russia, was sent to Paraguay to aid in preparation for the colonization of the refugees and to assist in their reception.

The Mennonite Central Committee had negotiated with the Corporacion Paraguaya (hereafter designated as CP) whose chief office was in New York, to which Corporation I referred in my article on the Canadian Mennonite Colony in the previous issue of the REVIEW, and had arranged for a price of $20 per hectare ($2\frac{1}{2}$ acres) for the land which the immigrants were to buy from the Corporation. Contracts covering the purchase of the land and the mutual obligations of the colonists and the Corporation to each other were signed in Germany before the refugees left for Paraguay. According to these contracts the CP promised to pre-

pare for the settlement of the refugees in the Chaco, to select some land subject to later revision of the choice by the colonists themselves, to transport them onto the land and to arrange for their food and shelter. The Corporation added $25,000 of its own funds to the funds furnished by the Mennonite Central Committee and handled the funds necessary for the operations in South America in its office in Asuncion. An accounting was made of the operations of this section of the common treasury and given to the Mennonite Central Committee.

On the 15th of March, 1930, the first group of refugees, consisting of 61 families with 357 souls left the refugee camp at Mölln, Germany, and on the same day embarked upon the Steamship "Bayern" for South America. The journey was completed without incident and on the 10th of April the group arrived in Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina where they were transferred to the river steamer "Apipe" of the Mihanovich line. The later groups with some exceptions also made the trip up the river on this small and dirty Argentine boat and the colonists in general believe that it is from this vessel that the third group got typhus germs and brought them into the colony, hence the "Apipe" has ever since been called the "typhus boat."

Upon their arrival in Asuncion this first group was received by the president of Paraguay, Dr. José P. Guggiari, who addressed friendly words of greeting to them and gave them a hearty welcome to his country. After further travel the group finally reached Puerto Casado, the river port where they were to disembark, on Good Friday, April 18, 1930, where G. G. Hiebert and the representative of the CP, Alexander Langer, were awaiting them. The Canadian Mennonites from the Colony Menno who were to transport the new immigrants by ox-cart from the end of the railroad at kilometer 145 (mile 90) had made it known that they would not be able to reach the end of the railroad on Sunday on account of the Easter festival. For this reason the new arrivals were detained several days in Puerto Casado where they were cared for in the barracks which had been built a few years before for the Canadian immigrants. On April 23 the company reached the end of the railroad and began the wearisome journey on the ox wagons of the Canadians over the narrow, dusty forest trails under the heat of the tropical sun. The mood of the immigrants was rather depressed and many had lost heart and were gloomy. The distance from other human habitation seemed to them to be tremendous. Ninety miles (145 km) they had traveled on the narrow gauge

railway winding through the primitive forest, and now they had to travel 68 miles (110 km) farther by wagon. The whole vast area of the Chaco, a territory almost as large as Germany, was not colonized. Where were they in this wilderness to sell their products, they asked themselves, provided that the light, sandy soil would be able to produce any products at all in such a heat. Asuncion, the capital of the country and their best market, was approximately 440 miles (700 km) distant from the colony by the river route and difficult to reach. Furthermore, the city was naturally well supplied with agricultural products by the surrounding settlements. They did not know, of course, at this time of the tremendous crops of valuable, fine-quality cotton that could be raised in the Chaco and which were destined to be their chief export product.

On the journey through the forest the new immigrants remarked a great deal about the uniform nature of the stunted forest which stretched away into the invisible distance on both sides. They had always imagined a primitive forest quite different, much better looking and filled with high and large trees. What they saw was really not a true forest but tangled undergrowth with occasional large trees which for the most part were good only for fuel. For some reason or other it did not appeal to them; perhaps they had some forebodings of the hard struggle they would yet have with this forest. But where in this wilderness would they be able to find wood to build with? Here and there, it is true, they could see larger trees but most of them, so the Canadians said, were hard as stone and heavier than water and could not be used for construction purposes. Good wood for furniture was also very rare and when found had to be brought out of the forest for use. And why then had the trees of the forest remained so small? Was it perhaps because it was too dry in the Chaco for normal growth? Or was the soil perhaps too alkaline? Here and there in the forest they saw large white alkali spots which looked like remnants of snow fields in the spring. The leaves of most of the trees were small, smooth and hard, all measures taken by nature to prevent evaporation of the precious moisture.

When it came to locating the colony, they learned from Langer, the former worker in the botanical gardens in Asuncion who had been hired as organizer of the colony by the CP, that they were to be located, not as they had always been told in Germany, west of Hoffnungsfeld and north of Menno, the Canadian colony, but northwest of the Canadians. In this way they were taken unnecessarily far away from the railway into the forest at

least 30 miles (50 km) more than necessary, but the CP had expressly reserved the right in the contract to select the land for the immigrants although they were to be permitted to change their location freely within the first six months if the choice was not satisfactory to them. The region in which they were located was almost completely level with only a gradual rise in elevation westward from the Paraguay River so that the two colonies were at an elevation of 180 meters (about 550 ft.) above sea level. The depth of the wells located on the scattered areas of prairie in the forest became greater the nearer they came to their new location.

At Hoffnungsfeld, 7½ miles (12 km) west of the Colony Menno, the CP had established an agricultural experiment station which was being managed by Langer, but the experienced immigrant farmers shook their heads at the careless and neglected appearance of the station. They had hoped to find on an experiment station various varieties of tropical plants which they would be able to use in their own farming operations but outside of three kinds of sorghum, a number of mulberry trees and some late watermelon plants they could not see anything. And even later the experiment farm, which had cost the Corporation an expensive amount of money, was of no value at all for the colony.

On April 26, 1930, the first immigrants reached the land which had been selected for them. The Canadians unloaded them at the so-called Corporation camp where there was a half-finished warehouse. Here they stacked boxes and casks of all sorts and hastened back to their own colony again. With great interest the new arrivals looked about them. The so-called "camp," that is, an area without trees, was approximately 550 feet square and looked exactly like many other camps which they had seen during the days of their transport—an area covered with high buffalo grass with only a few large trees. In the middle of the camp was a well which they learned with much satisfaction had sweet water. At the edge of the forest they saw a second building in construction in addition to the warehouse which was to be the company headquarters.

Practically nothing had been done by the CP in the way of preparation for the reception of the immigrants and their settlement on the land. At the edge of the "camp" which had been selected for the first village, a primitive house 20 x 55 x 8½ feet with a tin roof had been constructed which furnished shelter for a few families for the first while. The CP had intended to construct similar buildings in all the villages but the colonists were later glad that they had not found time to do so, for such houses had no

special value for them and only increased substantially the burden of debt which was already large enough. Only a small part of the first camp had been cleared of underbrush, merely a strip of 45 yards wide on the side adjoining the forest, and in addition five acres of forest. More serious was the failure of the CP to provide for sweet-water wells. It is true that one well had been dug on the northwest end of the camp but was found to contain alkaline water. Apparently discouraged by the result of the early digging, the representative of the Corporation had not undertaken any further digging. Consequently all the water had to be carried in buckets from the nearby Corporation camp, a distance of about a mile, because there were neither wagons, casks, nor tubs. In spite of the limited extent of the preparation, the total cost amounted to the substantial sum of 218,469.19 pesos ($3,000). It should be mentioned, however, that the whole movement proceeded very rapidly and that the Corporation was not expecting such a large group, in fact had protested against groups larger than 100 persons.

Finally after several weeks the camps which were to be the locations for the villages were selected and divided into parcels which were assigned by lot to the individual families in the villages. In parcelling out the pieces the settlers made a big mistake which they soon realized but unfortunately could not rectify. The parcels were long narrow strips of from 70 to 165 yards wide. This was much too narrow since each family received a parcel of 100 acres. This meant that each farm consisted of a long narrow strip reaching from the center of the camp into the forest and consequently a great deal of unnecessary labor was created by the unavoidable traveling back and forth. The mixed farming of the Chaco makes it necessary that the farmer spend much more time on his land than is necessary in Europe where wheat farming is practiced. Every day he has to be out on his field in the sub-tropical heat to plant, to cultivate or to harvest, for seedtime and harvest extend throughout a period of approximately three months each. For this reason, a narrow and long farm means much loss of valuable time and physical strength.

In quick succession the additional transports reached the Chaco so that by the end of 1930 a total of 279 families with 1500 souls had located in the Chaco. In 1931, 24 families with 123 souls, and in 1932 the Harbin refugees consisting of 80 families with 378 souls, were added to the group. The final total of immigrants was 383 families with 2,001 souls. This group together established 17 villages which constitute the Colony Fernheim. The list of villages with the year of establishment is as follows:

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1930 | 1. | Lichtfelde | 1930 | 10. | Rosenort |
| 1930 | 2. | Kleefeld | 1930 | 11. | Waldesruh |
| 1930 | 3. | Gnadenheim | 1930 | 12. | Rosenfeld |
| 1930 | 4. | Wiesenfeld | 1931 | 13. | Hiebertsheim |
| 1930 | 5. | Friedensfeld | 1932 | 14. | Blumenort |
| 1930 | 6. | Friedensruh | 1932 | 15. | Orlof |
| 1930 | 7. | Schönwiese | 1932 | 16. | Karlsruhe |
| 1930 | 8. | Schönbrunn | 1932 | 17. | Schönau |
| 1930 | 9. | Auhagen | | | |

The 383 families were located on 376 farms of 40 hectares or 100 acres each, so that a total of 15,040 hectares or 37,850 acres was purchased and occupied by the settlers by the end of 1932. In addition the CP donated 100 acres of land for the school in each village which adds 680 hectares or 1800 acres to the area so that the total land possessed by the entire Colony Fernheim amounts to 15,720 hectares or 39,650 acres. More than twice this amount of land lies between the villages. It is the plan that in time all of this land should be purchased from the CP for the oncoming generation or for new settlers.

The lack of water in the rather dry territory in which the Colony Fernheim is located was a source of considerable concern for the colonists from the very first day. They soon discovered that on the entire territory of the colony there was not a single spring, brook or stream or even a swampy spot which contains water the entire year around. The nearest river, the Verde, flows 36 miles (60 km) to the south and the Galvan about 110 miles to the northeast of the colony, both of them flowing into the Paraguay River. While the first families were still on the Corporation camp, the members of the first village began to hunt for water. Their first diggings were without good results. It is true that they found water at a depth of 3 to 5 feet but it was alkaline and not potable for human beings. They gave up the attempt because there was other more important and urgent work to be done. They had to have, for instance, a roof over their heads to protect them from the oncoming hot weather. Later they found sweet water after repeated digging although many still to-day haul their water from a Corporation camp. In 1933 one of the villages (Auhagen) still had no sweet water but had to haul it from approximately a mile and a quarter distant. Blumenort had a well at one end of the village, four villages had two wells apiece, one had three, three had four wells apiece, etc. Wiesenfeld was best supplied with sweet water, being the fortunate possessor of eighteen good wells. Gnadenheim

had five sweet water wells out of twenty-seven which had been dug. Since the time the author left the Chaco more wells have been found. The handicap for health and cleanliness due to the difficulty of finding water does not need to be pointed out.

Two groups of immigrants require special notice in an account of the settlement of Fernheim Colony, namely, the so-called Polish group and the Harbin group. Soon after the World War the German Mennonites in Poland were compelled to find some place to which they might emigrate. The villages at home were more than full and there was no more place for the oncoming generation. Furthermore it was practically impossible to secure land in Poland for another settlement there. Consequently, in the years 1925 to 1930, about 50 people emigrated to Canada from the settlement Deutsch Wymyschle alone. But these Polish Mennonites with their strong loyalty to their German culture had difficulty in adjusting themselves to permanent settlement in an English country because they saw that their children would inevitably be forced to become English-speaking Canadians in their new home. For this reason they recommended to the rest of the group in Poland who remained behind that they should not come to Canada but should rather endeavor to find another country for colonization. This advice was soon followed.

In August, 1928, Leonard Kliewer with his wife and two children emigrated to Sao Paolo in Brazil. In the following months four young men and a second family followed them to Brazil. All of these were resolved if possible to go to Paraguay later. A year later in August, 1929, one of the group, Cornelius Kliewer, unmarried, went to Paraguay to make a personal investigation of the possibilities of colonization in the Chaco. He found employment on the experimental farm at Hoffnungsfeld and from there visited all the villages of the Colony Menno. After several months stay in Chaco, Kliewer returned to Brazil to bring to the Chaco for permanent settlement the other Polish Mennonites who were there.

Back home in Poland the movement to Paraguay was started with the first group of 17 souls leaving Poland on June 1, 1930. On July 12, 1930, this group reached Fernheim and established the village of Rosenfeld on land adjoining the village of Lichtfelde, the first village of the Russian group. Rosenfeld has remained to date a Polish village. By the end of 1933 a total of fifty Polish Mennonites of nine families had settled in the Chaco in Rosenfeld. In 1933 the village was made a part of Fernheim Colony.

The story of the settlement of the Harbin group in the Chaco

which occurred in 1932 goes back to the year 1927. In that year four Mennonite colonies were established about 56 miles (60 km) from Blagoweschtschensk on the Amur River in East Siberia. The names of two of the villages were Usman and Sawitaja. In a short time the new settlements became quite prosperous. The settlers had hoped that at the great distance from the center of Russia at which they found themselves they would be more safe from the Bolshevik terror. But they were bitterly disappointed. It is true that the terror came much later than in the western part of Russia, but it came with the same methods and the same harshness to them in East Siberia also. Soon they were compelled by various measures which ruined their business to combine into collectives.

Under these circumstances it was quite natural that the colonists began to look longingly toward the blue Chinese mountains in the distance. From China perhaps, they thought, it would be possible to reach North America where they had relatives. First a few individuals made their escape after very careful preparation. Then smaller groups, chiefly of single young men, tried it. Most of them succeeded in their escape although a few were captured by the G. P. U. (Russian Secret Police) and several, unfortunately, were executed. Those who were fortunate enough to reach Harbin, the capital of Manchuria, reported by devious ways to their relatives and friends along the Amur about their experiences, warned them of dangers and gave advice for the escape and the trip into the interior of Manchuria. The number of those who were ready to risk the dangerous flight increased daily as the pressure of the G. P. U. and the merciless tax collectors increased.

The Soviet border patrols soon became aware of the unrest in the German villages and doubled their guard. Soviet spies in Harbin reported the daily increasing number of those who escaped. Day and night the villages were under guard but the determined spirit of the colonists overcame every obstacle and they soon learned how to outwit the G. P. U. In the night of December 16 and 17, 1931, two whole villages, namely, Schumanowka and Pribreshnoje, dared the flight on sixty sleds over the border across the frozen Amur River with all their possessions. The dangerous attempt was successful and all succeeded in getting across safely. On the other bank of the river, however, in Kanifu, the Chinese police received them in characteristic Chinese fashion, thoroughly examined them and used every possible pretence to get the last ruble from them. In Sacholjan, the nearest Chinese border town, the leaders of the group were imprisoned until the necessary money for permission to reside in the country was secured. Finally after endless negotia-

tions and after overcoming the greatest difficulties, they were permitted to set out in rented auto busses for Tsitsikar, the nearest railroad station, which was 310 miles (500 km) distant.

The trip by auto bus was terrible—more frightful than the flight by night across the Amur. Birth and death in the over-filled busses, hunger and freezing, murder and plunder were their lot; they escaped nothing. Exhausted, sick and in absolute poverty, they reached Harbin but no one complained for they were all exceedingly happy and thankful to have escaped the Soviet executioners.

The Chinese police authorities were not at all glad to receive these new immigrants and in numerous cases refused to grant permits for residence. All the refugees above the age of eighteen had to renew their permits every three months and each time were compelled to pay the sum of 10 Chinese dollars ($2.50). It was only after the German consulate interfered that conditions became more tolerable for the refugees. As more and more refugees came across the border and found their way to Harbin, a "Committee of German Refugees in Harbin" was organized to aid the new arrivals and to conduct them whenever it was possible from Sacholjan or Tsitsikar to Harbin, or to send them money for the trip. By October, 1931, 550 Mennonite refugees had collected in Harbin. The two entire villages referred to above came later.

In January, 1931, the first refugee home was established and in the autumn of the same year two additional homes were secured. For these homes the committee had to pay as monthly rent the sum of 1254 Chinese dollars ($320). A total of 726 wholly destitute refugees, chiefly Mennonites, but including other Protestants as well as Catholics, were cared for in these homes. In each of the homes there was a school for children. Altogether four teachers and 148 children were enrolled. A small hospital and dispensary also was established. Unfortunately, however, as a result of the exhausting experiences of the flight, the under-nourishment, and the unhygienic conditions, during the year between October 1, 1930 and October 1, 1931, a total of 78 persons died. Of that number 8 died of typhus, 24 of scarlet fever, and 46 of other diseases. Figures for the later period are not available.

The constant endeavors of the Mennonite Relief Committees in Europe and North America were directed to the goal of transporting the refugees as soon as possible from Harbin to America. Over 200 of the refugees in Harbin actually reached the United States during the year 1931, but finally this door was closed as was the door to Canada, so attempts were made to arrange for immigration to Mexico. Finally after this attempt ended in failure, the Men-

nonite Central Committee at a meeting on December 11, 1931, in Newton, Kansas, decided to bring the Harbin refugees to Paraguay and settle them in the Chaco in the Fernheim colony. But it was February 22, 1932, before the first group of 373 persons was able to leave Harbin. The remaining 184 Mennonites had to remain behind in Harbin because of lack of funds. At the present time plans are under way to bring this remnant to Brazil. The group left Shanghai on the 7th of April, 1934 and was to arrive in Rio de Janeiro about June 1, 1934.

The first group made the trip from Harbin to Dairen by rail and from there on the Japanese steamer "Ghoshun Maru" to Shanghai. On February 27, 1932, they sailed from Shanghai in the French steamer "d'Artagnan" of the American Lloyd line. This line actually transported the refugees from Shanghai to Buenos Aires for the remarkably low sum of $90 per adult, whereas the normal tariff, third class, just from Shanghai to Marseilles in France, is $112 per head.

The group reached Marseilles on the first of April, numbering by this time 374, one child having been born on the sea journey. Here two families with a total of ten persons had to be left behind because of illness. The others traveled by rail from Marseilles via Paris to Le Havre where four additional passengers joined the group from the refugee camp at Mölln, Germany. On April 5 a total of 367 persons left Le Havre on the French steamer "Croix" of the Chargeurs Reunis and arrived at Buenos Aires on April 28. On May 12, 1932, they finally reached Fernheim in the Chaco after a three months' journey half way around the globe. Here they established four villages east of the earlier settlement which they named Blumenort, Orloff, Karlsruhe and Schönau.

Thus the settlement of Russian Mennonites in the Chaco took place during a period of two years, from April, 1930 to April, 1932, just three years after the Canadians settled there from 1927 to 1928. The Russian colony slightly outnumbers the Canadian colony. The two colonies occupy adjoining areas which together constitutes a very substantial Mennonite settlement whose population at the present time is close to 4,000 souls.

# AN INQUIRY INTO THE TRUTH OF ACCUSATIONS OF FANATICISM AND CRIME AGAINST THE EARLY SWISS BRETHREN

By John Horsch

## II

Zwingli, in his last book on the Swiss Brethren, entitled *Elenchus,* hurls the most appalling charges against them. These accusations could be properly disregarded here were it not for the fact that to this day prominent writers accept some of them, solely on the authority of Zwingli. He wrote in this book: "If you investigate their life and conduct, it seems at the first contact innocent, pious, humble, attractive, nay, superior to this earth; you would almost think it to be superhuman. But when you have penetrated into the interior, you find such a pest that it is a shame even to mention."[47] "Among them it is no crime to lay murderous hands upon a brother; how much less will they recognize adultery and lewdness as transgressions."[48] He asserts that they have their wives in common, and the reason why they (sometimes) met at night was that they desired the opportunity for lewdness which they called spiritual marriages.[49] "These apostles of the devil," he says, "seek nothing but disturbance and confusion of affairs both human and divine."[50] "All their leaders are the most lost vagrants who either save their soul with their feet when they owe anything, or are so slothful and idle that they will not provide support by their hands."[51] "Some of them imitated Jonah and announced a limit of forty days to the city of Zurich."[52]

"In their evil church," says Zwingli further, they would have the sword removed that they might more freely indulge in transgression and finally overthrow the government.[53] "It is surprising effrontery that they call themselves a church."[54] "It is not a church but a conspiracy."[55] He accuses them repeatedly of every misdeed

47 Jackson, *Selected Works of Zwingli,* p. 127.
48 *Ibid.,* p. 171.
49 *Ibid.,* p. 191.
50 *Ibid.,* p. 137.
51 *Ibid.,* p. 195.
52 *Ibid.,* p. 135.
53 *Ibid.,* p. 196.
54 *Ibid.,* p. 194.
55 *Ibid.,* p. 186.

in the catalog of crimes.[56] "They are steeped in abominable crimes;"[56] "they excel all mortals in lewdness, adultery, murder, hatred, envy, arrogance, hypocrisy."[57] "The hypocrisy of the Roman pope had been brought into the light; now we must struggle with hypocrisy personified."[58] "As often as you [the Swiss Brethren] confess Christ (by 'you' I mean your leaders), you make a confession which is worse than that of the demons. For they had experienced His power in such measure that they sincerely confessed Him to be the Son of God, but you, when you confess Him, do it hypocritically."[59]

The following accusation against the Swiss Brethren was made in the Concordat, a mandate ordering measures to be taken in the persecution. It was very probably drawn up by Zwingli and made a law by Zurich, Bern and St. Gall in August 1527: "They boast without shame and without fear of God that God through His command and the Spirit has revealed to them His will, commanding them to commit abominable vices, such as murder, even of their natural brothers [plural number!] and other evil deeds, as they have actually become guilty of."[60] Obviously, such accusations are even more reprehensible than the cruel persecution itself.

The circumstances which gave Zwingli the occasion for writing the above mentioned book against the Brethren deserve special attention. He wrote this book upon the request of Berthold Haller, the leading Zwinglian reformer of Bern, who had asked him for material giving instruction on how to meet the arguments of the Anabaptists. Haller had sent Zwingli a copy of the Schleitheim Confession, the recognized confession of faith of the Swiss Brethren. The pamphlet containing this confession had been taken from an imprisoned Anabaptist in Bern and had been handed to Haller by the authorities of Bern with the request that he refute it. Instead of complying with this request Haller sent the booklet to Zwingli asking him urgently for instruction how the Confession of the Anabaptists could be answered. He confided to Zwingli that he was unable to meet their arguments. Twice in his letter which he sent with this booklet he begged Zwingli to give his request immediate attention. In succeeding letters also Haller entreated Zwingli to assist him in his efforts to refute the arguments of the Brethren, indicating his anxiety to meet the expectations of the Council in

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[56] *Ibid.*, p. 195.
[57] *Ibid.*, p. 187.
[58] *Ibid.*, p. 137.
[59] *Ibid.*, p. 150.
[60] Simler, *Sammlung*, I, p. 451.

this regard. "Help us, dearest Ulrich," he wrote, "to frustrate the designs of these men."

Upon the receipt of the Confession of the Brethren together with Haller's letters Zwingli obviously perceived that all that he had written against the Anabaptists—including four books—had failed of its purpose. Undoubtedly Berthold Haller had read all of Zwingli's writings on baptism. If Haller, the leading Zwinglian reformer of the great canton of Bern, and his associates, were unable to cope with the situation and meet the Brethren on Scriptural grounds, it was but natural to assume that the "lesser lights" among the state church clergy found themselves to be in a similar or worse predicament. Reports of the spread of the Brethren came from various cantons. There seemed to be ground for the fear of a further spread of the Swiss Brethren Church in Bern and elsewhere, unless the civil authorities, following the example of the Council of Zurich, would "make the executioner the highest doctor," silencing all opposition of the dissenters. However, Berthold Haller had stated in some of his letters to Zwingli that he did not favor such a course of violence and tyranny.

In consequence of these developments Zwingli thought it needful to make an outstanding effort in the way of refuting the position of the Brethren. This he decided to do for the benefit not only of Berthold Haller (to whom he gave instruction and advice in lengthy letters) but also to give needed aid to the state church clergy in general. Zwingli had been informed that, as he stated, almost every Anabaptist had a copy of the Schleitheim Confession, and he saw the urgent need of publishing a refutation of it. Since he of course, did not desire to be instrumental in publishing the doctrine of the Brethren among the people in general, he translated the Confession into the Latin language and published it with his refutation, likewise in Latin, addressing his book to the clergy. Latin was the language of scholarship in that day; a majority of the clergy had spent years in learning this language. Zwingli gave this book the title *In catabaptistarum strophas elenchus* (Refutation of the Tricks of the Anabaptists).[61]

The contents of this book seem to indicate that Zwingli had become fearful of the final outcome of the conflict. When the Zwinglian reformer Wolfgang Capito, of Strasburg, had read this book of Zwingli, he expressed himself to the effect that he would give its contents further consideration before giving his opinion on

[61] For an English translation of this book see Jackson, M. J., *Selected Works of Huldreich Zwingli,* Philadelphia, 1901.

it.[62] As a book of reviling and unfounded accusations Zwingli's *Elenchus* has scarcely an equal in the literature of the Reformation period. He indeed says: "I can abundantly prove these things, if occasion demands."[63] As we have seen, the book is addressed to the ministers of the Swiss Protestant (Zwinglian) state church. Apparently Zwingli did not believe that evidence was needed, or that his intended readers would question his statements. August Baur, an eminent Zwingli scholar, asserted that Zwingli's appalling accusations "are not based on mere rumors and fabrications but on valid, unquestionable testimony."[64] Unfortunately he failed to give the slightest clue to the nature of this testimony. Baur further made the assertion that these charges against the Swiss Brethren can be disregarded only "if proof can be brought forth that they are inventions and falsehoods."[65] In other words, he held the Brethren guilty upon Zwingli's unsupported accusations unless their innocence could be proved.

Happily, such proofs as Baur calls for, are available. They are found in Zwingli's own writings. Zwingli made various statements which contradict his own accusations against the Brethren. Repeatedly he stated that the Brethren differed from him only in unimportant minor points. He addressed them, for example, in these words: "If one looks closely into this matter, one can see that you contend for unimportant outward things."[66] "On account of certain outward things, which are not of great importance," he says, "they have failed in love (toward the state church);"[67] "for the sake of external things they place a serious hindrance in the way of the Word of God."[68] And again, Zwingli wrote in a book dedicated to the Catholic King of France, "But that no one may suppose that the dissension is in regard to doctrines which concern the inner man, let it be said that the Anabaptists make us difficulty only because of unimportant outward things, such as these: whether infants or adults should be baptized and whether a Christian may be a magistrate."[69]

There is abundant evidence that the appalling charges against the Swiss Brethren which were made by Zwingli in his *Elenchus* are

[62] *Theol. Studien und Kritiken,* 1884, p. 467.
[63] Jackson, *Selected Works of Zwingli,* p. 129.
[64] Baur, *Zwinglis Theologie,* II, p. 243.
[65] *Ibid.,* p. 206.
[66] *Zwinglis Werke,* III, p. 406.
[67] *Ibid.,* IV, p. 216.
[68] *Ibid.,* p. 206.
[69] *Ibid.,* III, p. 872.

unfounded. One of the outstanding proofs that these accusations are without foundation is the fact that in the public debates with the Swiss Brethren, which were held in Zurich, Basel, Bern, Zofingen and elsewhere, Zwingli's charges against them were never considered or even mentioned. In the great debate of Zofingen, in 1532, a spokesman of the Zwinglian state church said, "We are of one mind in the leading articles of faith, and our controversy with the Anabaptists has to do only with external things which are not in accordance with the gospel. For the sake of these things they disown us. If they would stand with us in these things, we should be able to accomplish much good."[70] Again, the spokesman of the state church in this debate,[71] as well as in the debate held in Bern in 1538,[72] said that it was chiefly "the pious" who united with the Brethren. They stated furthermore that the Anabaptists had withdrawn from the state church "through a commendable zeal,"[73] and Zwingli made a similar statement about them.[74]

Berthold Haller wrote to Martin Butzer: "We realize that the best and most sincere people are led astray by the Anabaptists,"[75] and Vadian expressed himself to the same effect. Butzer wrote in 1531 to Margaretha Blaurer: "I should not find fault with the Anabaptists who have a zeal for God, if they did not despise the established church and dissented from it." In 1532 the clergy of the state church, assembled in Bern, addressed the government in a lengthy statement in which they said that "the Anabaptists guard themselves against offensive vices which are very common among our people."[76] Wolfgang Capito wrote concerning the Anabaptists: "As concerns the principal articles and vital points of faith they do not err at all."[77] He adds his conviction that this will become fully evident at the last day.

Johann Jakob Breitinger, head of the Zwinglian state church of Zurich, wrote in 1615 about the Swiss Brethren: "They have their peculiar ideas but teach nevertheless faith in God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They do not hold errors which would cause a man to be lost, but such as have been taught by some of the old church fathers. And no one can deny that the Lutherans do not

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70 *Zofingen Gespräch,* p. 27b.
71 *Ibid.,* pp. 19a, 37a.
72 *Acta, Berner Gespräch,* p. 29.
73 *Ibid.,* p. 118.
74 *Zwinglis Werke,* III, p. 378.
75 De Quervain, *Kirchliche und soziale Zustände in Bern,* p. 139.
76 McGlothlin, *Die Berner Täufer bis* 1532, p. 36.
77 Baum, *Capito und Butzer,* p. 375.

defend lesser but greater errors, and besides they defame and condemn us, while we none-the-less are of the opinion that we can consider them our brethren if they would only take a friendly attitude toward us."[78] At a later date Breitinger expressed similar sentiments.[79] In the debate of 1538 the Swiss Brethren were addressed by the spokesman of the state church as brothers but were told at the close of the debate that, since they were found unwilling to accept instruction, they could no longer be so addressed.

August Baur made a noteworthy statement in which he contradicts his own assertion that Zwingli's *Elenchus* offers a correct description of the doctrine and life of the Swiss Brethren. Baur speaks in one place of the Brethren as "a general dissenting church."[80] Now, if Zwingli's accusations against them were founded on fact, the Swiss Brethren could not be properly spoken of as a church. Zwingli, in fact, explicitly denied that they were a church. He says, they were "a conspiracy, a grossly immoral, criminal rabble." Zwingli's mistake consisted in taking for granted that the evil stories about the Anabaptists which came to his ears were true. Says J. C. Mörikofer, in his biography of Zwingli, concerning the *Elenchus*: "It must be conceded that Zwingli in this book presents in lurid colors as facts that which came to his ears as rumor."[81] The Reformed church historian Professor Paul Wernle of the University of Basel, wrote: "Zwingli failed to realize how great a wrong he did the Anabaptists [the Swiss Brethren] by heaping on their heads all shameful accusations."[82] Zwingli evidently ignored the fact that his own early followers were accused of various crimes, such as he now laid to the charge of the Brethren.

An important evidence of the falsity of Zwingli's appalling accusations is the fact that the general population of the Swiss cantons in which the Brethren had congregations, were deeply impressed by their devotion and piety. Of this there is striking evidence. We have noted Heinrich Bullinger's important remark that "the people ran after the Anabaptists as if they were the living saints." The population in general disapproved their persecution by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, as will be more fully indicated elsewhere. Despite being threatened by severe punishment for befriending them, many of the people of the state church gave

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[78] Mörikofer, J. J., *Breitinger und Zürich,* p. 150.
[79] *Ibid.,* p. 153.
[80] *Zwinglis Theologie,* II, 174.
[81] *Ulrich Zwingli,* II, p. 72.
[82] *Der Evangelische Glaube,* II, *Zwingli,* p. 355.

the Brethren food and shelter and apprised them of the approach of the catch-polls. A notable testimony to the point, dating from a later period, is found in the important work *Probier-Stein dess Täufferthums (Touchstone of Anabaptism)*, by George Thormann, a prominent theologian of the Protestant state church, published in 1693. Thormann wrote:

> "The Anabaptists are generally held in great esteem because among our country people [among whom the Swiss Anabaptists lived] the opinion prevails that to see an Anabaptist is to see a saint, an unworldly, regenerated person; and that there are no stricter or more sincere people than they.
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> "I have observed that our country folk are holding the Anabaptists in very high esteem; and many of our people look upon them as saints, as the salt of the earth and the very kernel of Christendom. Yea, many are of the opinion that a good Christian and an Anabaptist are but two names for the same thing.
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> "Oh how great is the number of those of our people who believe that the way of the Anabaptists is a far surer way of salvation but who nevertheless remain with us [probably because of the persecution], and are thus halting between two opinions.
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> "If an Anabaptist would be put to death for his faith," says Thormann, "would not all the people exclaim, 'a martyr!'" (In that period the persecution was confined to imprisonment, exacting heavy fines, and exile.)

In passing it may be noted that Thormann's work of about 700 pages gives a detailed and on the whole, reliable description of the life of the Swiss Brethren of that period. The purpose of the book is to show that it is possible to live as devotedly in the national church as in the Church of the Swiss Brethren.

After finishing the *Elenchus* Zwingli took further steps toward the suppression of the Swiss Brethren movement. Through his efforts the governments of Zurich, Bern, and St. Gall jointly passed a mandate named Concordat, which was mentioned above, accusing the Brethren of appalling crimes and prescribing the severest measures of persecution against them.

According to the assertion of Zwingli[83] and Bullinger[84] the Swiss Brethren taught against paying interest, taxes and other dues imposed by the civil government. Now, the same charge was preferred against Zwingli in an earlier period, as he himself states repeatedly.[85] This accusation against the Brethren was repeated by

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83 *Zwinglis Werke*, IV, p. 388.

84 *Von dem unverschampten fräfel*, fol. 144b, 169a.

85 *Zwinglis Werke*, II, p. 519; *Werke*, ed. Schuler and Schulthess, II, 2, p. 301.

a spokesman of the state church in the debate of Zofingen in 1532. In reply the Brethren said:

> "We have never taught that interest, taxes, tribute, or whatever one owes, should not be paid. The accusation that we hold the contrary opinion we commit to God. If any one among us would be found disobedient in regard to this duty, and the government meted out severe punishment to him, we would have no criticism to make. We have willingly rendered to the governments what we owed them, and if any one of like faith with us would refuse to do this, we would not permit it or let him go unpunished. On the great day of the Lord it will be made manifest that such is our attitude in this matter, and that the accusations to the contrary are not true to fact. To refuse to pay interest, taxes, etc., would be contrary to God's Word, and if we taught such a thing, we would be of the evil one."[86]

To this statement of the Brethren the state church theologians made a reply withdrawing their unfounded charge. The speaker of the state church apologized for having falsely accused the Brethren, and said further: "We would here admonish all who perhaps heretofore believed that the Anabaptists teach that one was not under obligation to pay interest and taxes, to take notice that this is not correct, but that they, even as we also, teach on the authority of God's Word that all men should pay what they owe."[87]

As already stated, the state church leaders who made this apology had, previous to this debate, held the Brethren guilty of this erroneous teaching, and this charge, together with many other equally groundless accusations, being based on mere hear-say, was repeated not only by Zwingli and Bullinger but also by many recent writers. Never had any of the Brethren been taken to task by the magistrates for refusal to pay taxes or interest, or for expressing the opinion that these obligations should not be met. If any of the Brethren had transgressed in this regard, the magistrates would doubtless have been aware of it, and the state church theologians could have pointed to it. The pertinent charges made by Zwingli and Bullinger are but evidences of their unreliability in the unfavorable statements which they made about the Brethren.

Bullinger, in his first book against Anabaptism, advanced a severe charge against the Brethren in regard to the question of interest on lent money. It may be recalled that in the Mosaic law taking interest was forbidden, and strictly orthodox Jews even today take interest only from gentiles. Martin Luther emphatically

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[86] *Zofingen Gespräch,* fol. 105b.
[87] *Ibid.,* fol. 106b.

disapproved taking interest, and the Swiss Brethren were of one mind with him on this question. They held that lending money ceases to be a work of Christian love if the lender takes interest.[88] They were of the opinion that a Christian should not take interest though he is under duty to pay it if he has agreed to do so. Now, if it is wrong, says Bullinger, to take interest, the one who pays it becomes an accomplice in committing sin. It follows, he says further, that the Anabaptists are of the opinion that "no Christian is under any duty to pay interest," and he asserts that an attitude such as this "will cause riot and uproar." Therefore he asserted that the Swiss Brethren are "a mutinous sect."[89]

Now, Bullinger, in these accusations and denunciations clearly but unknowingly incriminated Zwingli himself. Bullinger was unaware of the fact that Zwingli himself had formerly held precisely the same opinion as the Brethren on this question. Zwingli had written in 1524: "Although it is contrary to divine law to *take* interest, it is in accordance with God's will to *pay* it. . . . Therefore the excuse is unacceptable that you give your creditor occasion to sin by paying him interest."[90] "This is my teaching concerning interest," says Zwingli, "but those who wish me ill assert that I teach that interest should not be paid."[91]

This shows as intimated above, that Bullinger's denunciations of those who held this view implicate Zwingli and the earlier Zwinglianism. Unknowingly and unintentionally he makes the Zwingli of a former period the leader of "a mutinous sect." Now, if Bullinger was so inadequately informed about Zwingli, is it reasonable to accept him as an authority in his statements about the Anabaptists? And while he would never intentionally state anything unfavorable about Zwingli, unless there was in his opinion definite need for saying it and he had full evidence that it was founded on fact, he clearly exercised less care in reporting things that were unfavorable to the Anabaptists.

The charge that the early Brethren held unsound ideas regarding the second coming of Christ was only recently repeated in a Mennonite publication.[92] Zwingli made the statement that Conrad Grebel on a certain occasion said "the Messiah was at hand

88 Wernle, *Zwingli,* p. 116.

89 *Von dem unverschampten fräfel,* fol. 144b.

90 *Zwinglis Werke,* III, p. 388f.

91 *Ibid.,* II, p. 519.

92 *Gedenkschrift zum* 400 *jährigen Jubiläum der Mennoniten oder Taufgesinnten,* Ludwigshafen a. Rh., 1925, p. 61.

even now."[93] Zwingli, however, added that he did not know to what or to whom Grebel had reference. Evidently this is one of the many worthless charges of Zwingli. He could have asked Grebel to explain himself further. Professor Walther Koehler has made the statement that the Brethren of Zollikon intended to come to Zurich to cry woe over the city as an indication that the judgment was at hand.[94] The reference to the sources given in support of this statement says merely that if the Anabaptists of Zollikon would attempt to do this, it should not be permitted. Evidently the Council of Zurich had heard that this was their intention, but whether this report was more reliable than the many false rumors and accusations against them is impossible to ascertain. Needless to say, they cannot be rightly held guilty without evidence. There is no evidence that they ever did anything of this sort.

Unsound notions concerning Christ's second advent, such as setting the time of His coming, were evidently not expressed among the evangelical Anabaptists (the Swiss Brethren, Mennonites and Hutterites). Yet it was indeed but natural that the terrible persecution awakened among them a lively hope for the coming of the Lord. The Anabaptist Hans Hut (who was not of the Swiss Brethren and died before the rise of the Hutterites and Mennonites) interpreted certain Scriptures (Rev. 12:14 and Dan. 7:25) that the persecution would continue for three and a half years, till the summer of 1528, when apostate Christendom would be punished by an invasion of the Turks, and this would be followed by Christ's second coming. That Hans Hut set the day of the coming of Christ is clearly an invention of his antagonists. Besides Hut, Melchior Hoffmann and a few others, among them Martin Luther, foretold the year of this great event.

The most notable instance of this sort of unsound enthusiasm in the time of the Reformation is an occurrence in which Michael Stiefel, a Lutheran minister, figured most prominently. He was an ardent Lutheran and a personal friend of the reformer of Wittenberg. After laboring for some time for the Lutheran cause in Swabia and Austria in the earlier years of the Reformation movement, he was installed by Luther personally as the pastor of Lochau in Saxony. From the prophecy of Daniel and the book of Revelation Michael Stiefel calculated that the second coming of the Lord, to be followed by the end of the world, would take place in 1533. Somewhat later he announced that this great event was to come

[93] Egli, *Actensammlung*, p. 309.
[94] *Gedenkschrift*, p. 61.

on October 19, of that year, at 8 o'clock in the morning. Many, against Luther's warnings, accepted his predictions and his assertion that he was the angel of Rev. 11:15, the prophet sent to announce to the world the great things that were to come to pass. Early in the morning of the day set for the advent of Christ and the end of the world, the people of Lochau and many who had come to the town from the surrounding country, to be near the prophet in that solemn hour, were frightened by what some supposed to be the sound of the trumpet. It proved to be the horn of the cow herd who had received orders to drive out the cattle, since the prophet had announced that at the moment of His coming all animals would die instantly, and it was feared that this would cause too great excitement if witnessed by the people.

Michael Stiefel had for some time attempted to prepare the people by frequent preaching, but they evidently awaited the day with fear. At seven o'clock he held a final communion service in the church and ended the sermon with a cry: "He shall come, come, come!" There was wailing and expression of great fear until the hour had passed. At nine o'clock a police force sent by the Elector arrived. They seized the preacher and took him to Wittenberg. Needless to say, he recognized that he had erred. "Michael has had a little trial (*Anfechtlein*)," wrote Luther, "but it shall not be to his hurt." Somewhat later Stiefel was given the pastorate at Holzdorf near Wittenberg which was a more acceptable position than the one he had held at Lochau.[95] The Elector of Saxony, John Frederick, objected at first, to his instalment at Holzdorf, urging that "his error has spread through the whole German nation and great offence has resulted from it."[96], but Luther favored his appointment. This, apparently, is the only instance on record in the time of the Reformation that people flocked together on a set day to await the end of the world. Other prophets, e. g. Hans Wolff of Benfeld near Strasburg, set the day, but apparently changed their mind before the date came. As early as the year 1523 Michael Stiefel had published a booklet defending the view that Luther was the Elijah who was to come.[97]

Luther himself was not free of unsound notions concerning the return of the Lord. In 1521 he expected that certain signs in the heavens which should precede the last day would be seen in 1534. In 1532 he expressed the opinion that the last day would

95 Köstlin-Kawerau, *Martin Luther,* p. 323; Kolde, *Martin Luther,* II, 418.
96 *Real-Encyklopädie,* XIX, p. 26.
97 Mathesius, *Luthers Leben in Predigten,* p. 389, 414.

come before the close of the year.[98] Later he did not believe that the world would stand until 1548, "for Ezechiel is against it." Karlstadt, Luther's opponent, wrote in 1525: "Doctor Luther has for a year frightened and hindered us with the appearing of the last day; and now we see that he has announced lies and the imaginations of his heart."[99]

A number of Protestant writers, who were not aware of Luther's ideas concerning the threatening invasion by the Turks, have censured Hans Hut and other Anabaptists who expressed the view that God would use this invasion as a judgment over Christendom. In a number of his earlier writings Luther stated that armed resistance against the Turks was to be condemned for two reasons: first, it was contrary to Christian principle to take the sword, and second because "God would through the Turk punish our sins." Luther believed that the Turk would conquer the land and then the end would come. For the Anabaptists, who were hunted down and killed like wild beasts, it was but natural to conceive of the idea of swift punishment through the Turk. "It is impossible," said Simprecht Widemann in Augsburg, probably a follower of Hans Hut, "that punishment for these things be much longer delayed."[100]

In an article printed in a work published by the South German Mennonite conference it is asserted that the Swiss Brethren did not recognize the Bible as the sole authority but partly depended on ecstatic visions for new revelations, and therefore they cannot be considered as altogether free from the errors of the Münsterites.[101] Evidently in the article in question the fact has not been sufficiently taken into consideration that the source material upon which the statements made in the article are based cannot all be placed in one and the same category as concerns reliability. On the whole it may be said that for determining the doctrinal position of the Brethren and their general attitude toward the state church only their own written statements are unquestionably reliable. Their antagonists were in many instances obviously careless and inaccurate, to say the least, in their statements regarding the faith and practice of the Brethren. Even court records giving the testimony of witnesses

[98] Köstlin, *Luthers Theologie*, II, p. 337.

[99] Zur Linden, *M. Hofmann*, p. 218; Köstlin in *St. u. Kr.*, 1873, p. 125; Grisar, *Luther*, III, p. 209; Jäger, *Carlstadt*, p. 437.

[100] *Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereins für Schwaben u. Neuburg*, XXVIII, 1901, p. 96.

[101] *Gedenkschrift*, p. 61.

who testified against them have often been found to contradict well-established facts. Also the testimony of the Brethren themselves as given before civil authorities were evidently sometimes inaccurately reported.

The fact of the unreliability of much of the source material becomes perfectly clear when it is remembered that some of the statements made about the Brethren before the civil authorities by Zwingli and others were repudiated by the Brethren themselves when they were laid before them. However, much of the statements contained in material found in the archives of Zurich about the early Brethren (published for the most part by Emil Egli) were never laid before them and it is impossible to say whether or not they would have recognized them as correct. The article in question is based largely on the source material published by Egli without regard to the impossibility of ascertaining whether the material is reliable.

In the article just mentioned it is stated that Blaurock, according to alleged statements of certain of his friends, had asserted that he had miraculous visions. A statement to this effect was made by a witness in Zurich;[102] this witness however, admitted that he did not have any personal knowledge of the matter. He had only repeated what he had heard from another person who, in turn, was in no better position to testify, for this second person also confessed that he could not speak from first hand knowledge but had said what he had heard from others. Besides, the fact cannot be overlooked that the witness who gave this "third-hand" testimony was strongly prejudiced, being the principal opponent and antagonist of the Brethren. There is another early document which has been supposed to make a similar assertion concerning Blaurock's supposed visions. However the statement found in this document is unclear. It is not found at all in an earlier issue of the same document.[103] In the same article it is stated that one of the Anabaptists of Zurich, named George Schad, claimed a personal divine revelation because he made the statement that "God had given him the promise of forgiveness if he abstained from sin."[104]

But Zwingli also often expressed himself similarly. He said, for example, at the disputation of January, 1523, in reference to the communion service, "Every one may, according to the revelation of

102 Egli, *Actensammlung,* p. 313; *Gedenkschrift,* p. 60.
103 Füssli, *Beyträge,* I, 243f.
104 Egli, *Actensammlung,* p. 283.

the Holy Spirit, serve himself."[105] And again Zwingli said at the same occasion, "I admonish you with all diligence that you submit yourself to God in all things which the Spirit of God teaches and commands."[106] Somewhat earlier Zwingli had written that one who was excluded from the church because of glaring sin, should be again received into the church when the Spirit would "admonish" the congregation to do so.[107] And Leo Judae, Zwingli's coworker, wrote in a letter to Bullinger: "Who has ever before preached so clearly and fearlessly that which our Zwingli has brought to light through the revelation of the divine Spirit."[108] Do not the above quotations from George Schad belong to the same category as those from Zwingli and Judae?

Again, Felix Manz, in the death sentence pronounced upon him, was charged with having boasted of special revelations. He was accused of pretending that "once or twice in prison and elsewhere certain epistles of Paul were revealed to him as if he had them before his eyes." It is by no means certain that Manz' words were correctly reported, but even if this was the case, the accusation would not mean that he pretended he had received new revelations besides Scripture. It would mean that a miracle had taken place, bringing back to his memory certain portions of Scripture.[109]

It is indeed strange that the Anabaptists are criticized and denounced by Protestant historians for views which were in fact held by Luther and Zwingli. Did not both Luther and Zwingli believe in the possibility of new revelations? Regarding Luther's position on the point in question compare his letters to Melanchthon and Amsdorf, both dated January 13, 1522, from the Wartburg, giving advice on how to deal with the so-called Zwickau Prophets.[110] He does not condemn new revelations but gives instructions as to how they may be tested. And was not Luther believed to be a prophet by his early followers? Johann Mathesius, one of his first biographers, mentions various prophecies spoken by Luther which were fulfilled, and then remarks: "With many sure prophecies he confirmed his doctrine." And again: "The beloved man Melanchthon calls our Doctor Luther the last Elijah concerning whom always a prophecy obtained in Christendom." "Thus

105 *Zwinglis Werke,* II, p. 793.

106 *Ibid.,* II, p. 799.

107 *Ibid,* II, p. 288.

108 Pestalozzi, *Leo Judae,* p. 25.

109 Egli, *Actensammlung,* p. 310. For additional material on the point under consideration see *Mennonite Quarterly Review,* V, p. 15, note 109.

110 Ender, *Luthers Briefwechsel,* III, p. 271ff.

the Holy Spirit prophesied of this third Elijah, Dr. Martin Luther."[111] It may be recalled that the Anabaptist Melchior Hoffmann was also believed by his followers to be the third Elijah, and certain writers have taken this as an indication of the fanaticism of the Anabaptists in general. What about Melanchthon's fanaticism?

The writer of the article in question[112] makes much of the fact that there are cases on record in which ministers of the state church were interrupted in their preaching by Anabaptists. But before the rise of Anabaptism such offences were repeatedly committed by followers of Zwingli. Zwingli himself was, in fact, the first to offend in such a way. In July of the year 1522 he interrupted and contradicted Francis Lambert of Avignon who preached in the church of St. Mary in Zurich. Later in the same year Leo Judae, Zwingli's friend and coworker, in one of the churches of Zurich interrupted repeatedly the sermon of a monk. A number of men who sided with the preaching monk seized Judae and began to handle him roughly, but some of his friends hurried to his aid. A hand-to-hand fight in the church was narrowly averted.[113] Again, William Farel, the well-known coworker of John Calvin, once met on a bridge at Montbeliard a solemn procession in honor of Saint Anthony. He snatched the image carried by a priest from his hands and threw it into the river, exclaiming: "Poor idolaters! Will you never cease serving false gods!" In consequence, Farel saw himself obliged to flee the city.

Again, on the basis of a statement made by a woman who was supposed to be an Anabaptist,[114] the same article advances the view that in the opinion of the Brethren the Christian is not under obligation to be subject to the civil government at all.[115] The same article charges further that the Swiss Brethren defended communism. The latter accusation is based on a statement made in August, 1525, by Heini Fryg who said before the authorities of Zurich that he had formerly been an Anabaptist but since February, of the same year, had forsaken Anabaptism. He stated that "while he was with them they had almost persuaded him to sell his farm and cease to

111 Mathesius, *Luthers Leben in Predigten,* pp. 399, 398, 414. Luther's supposed prophecies were collected and published by Johann Lapäus in a book which was reprinted in 1846.

112 *Gedenkschrift,* pp. 48-64.

113 Pestalozzi, *Leo Judae,* p. 17; Staehelin, *Huldreich Zwingli,* I, p. 259.

114 Egli, *Actensammlung,* p. 755.

115 *Gedenkschrift,* p. 58.

work for a livelihood, for at that time they were of the opinion that all property should be held in common."[116] Heini Fryg, at the time when he made this statement, was an antagonist of the Brethren and said this as a charge against them. There is no evidence whatever that his statement was founded on fact. All evidence is against such a supposition.[117]

The late Professor Henry Eyster Jacobs, wrote: The confession of faith of the Mennonites, p. 39, shows that they sanctioned the doctrine "that married persons may be divorced and abandon one another and be married to another person of the same faith".[118] This assertion is so obviously false in every respect that to refute it would be wasting words. No Mennonite confession expresses such a view.

A number of writers have defended the view that Anabaptism was not as radical a departure from Romanism as was the Protestantism of the state church type, in other words, that Romanism has more in common with Anabaptism than with state church Protestantism.[119] This assumption is largely based on a statement made in 1528 by Fridolin Meyer of Strasburg who had been an Anabaptist but had become a follower of Hans Denk. The Denkians, it is true, were sometimes called Anabaptists. However, they did not rebaptize but remained within the state churches. Fridolin Meyer's statement follows: "I have found a middle way, as it were, between popery and Lutheranism, by which I have avoided all separation and am striving alone for a good, upright Christian life consisting in unfeigned love to God and my neighbor." This statement has been supposed to mean that, in Fridolin Meyer's opinion, Anabaptism is a happy medium between Romanism and Lutheranism, in other words, that Romanism is more closely related to Anabaptism than to state church Protestantism.

Now Meyer, as just indicated, at the time when he made this statement had forsaken Anabaptism. He did not write from the

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116 Egli, *Actensammlung,* p. 376; Füssli, *Beyträge,* II, p. 365.

117 Compare Strasser, *Der Schweizerische Anabaptismus zur Zeit der Reformation,* p. 177; Müller, E., *Geschichte der Bernischen Täufer,* Frauenfeld, 1895, p. 44. Compare also Bullinger, *Widertoufferen Ursprung,* fol. 129[2] and *Sabbata,* p. 142.

118 *The Book of Concord,* I, p. 53.

119 Among those who have expressed this opinion may be mentioned Lüdemann, *Reformation und Täufertum:* Theodor Kolde in *St. u. Kr.* 1894, p. 198; Staehelin, *Ulrich Zwingli,* II, p. 463; Baur, *Zwinglis Theologie,* II, p. 244; Hadorn, *Kirchengeschichte der ref. Schweiz,* p. 73; Bossert in *Theol. Ltztg.,* 1907, No. 4, p. 115.

viewpoint of Anabaptism. Hans Denk, whose follower he was, had been an Anabaptist (not Swiss Brethren) leader, but shortly before his death (in 1527) had renounced Anabaptism and expressed regret that he had ever practiced the baptism of believers and had ever withdrawn from the state church. The followers of Hans Denk avoided separation from the state church and hence were not persecuted. Fridolin Meyer's expression that he had found a "middle way" does not refer to Anabaptism. The expression "the middle way," in the writings of the Denkians and of Caspar von Schwenckfeld has reference to an attitude of outward accommodation to the state churches and their practices, in other words, an attitude of "standing still" in regard to such practices as were not approved by the state churches. This was the easy way, "the way out" of immediate difficulties, in contrast to the way of the cross. The great apostle of the middle way, or *Stillstand* (standing still), was Caspar von Schwenckfeld.

The assertion that there is a closer inner relationship between Anabaptism and Romanism than between state church Protestantism and Romanism rests on a purely imaginary foundation. In making such an assertion a number of outstanding facts are lost sight of. The fathers of the Swiss Brethren (the first Anabaptist sect) demanded immediate and complete separation from Rome. They were greatly offended at the half-way measures for reform taken for some time in actual practice by Luther and Zwingli. The foremost Protestant leaders, including John Calvin, held some of the most essential practices of Romanism to be idolatrous and blasphemous; they held the pope to be antichrist, the principal representative of the kingdom of evil on earth. Nevertheless these same men believed the church of which the pope was the recognized head to be the true Christian church. They asserted that they had merely reformed, or improved, the existing Roman Church but had not founded new churches. Both Luther and Zwingli held that the Anabaptists erred fundamentally by their repudiation of Roman Catholic baptism and ordination. They severely denounced the Anabaptists for their separation from Romanism and for establishing another church.

# SOME EARLY AMERICAN AMISH MENNONITE DISCIPLINES

Translated and Edited by Harold S. Bender

## INTRODUCTION

The Amish Mennonite congregations in America, the first of which was apparently organized in Berks County, Pennsylvania, north of Reading, about 1740, have preserved the ancient and traditional congregational form of church government held by the Swiss Brethren. Their brethren, the Swiss Mennonites proper, from whom they separated in 1693-1697 chiefly on the issue of the ban and avoidance and stricter discipline, and who came to America a generation earlier than they, have for the most part gradually adopted the synodal or conference form of church government. The Amish as a whole remained in one general fellowship group until the great separation of 1850-1860 when the division between the "Old Order" and the progressive elements took place. Those Amish Mennonite congregations which have become "more progressive" in the past two generations, have followed the example of their Mennonite brethren and have either adopted a somewhat diluted form of synodal or conference government or have altogether merged with Mennonite Conferences. However the more conservative Amish congregations who did not fraternize or affiliate with the Mennonites and who have frequently been called the "Old Order Amish" have maintained to the present day the congregational form of government. The first Amish conference in America was held in 1862. This was a representative gathering of the "progressive" elements and was followed by regular annual conferences.

Because of the lack of regular and duly constituted official conferences or synods in the earlier days which governed the Amish congregations and which passed resolutions, framed regulations and kept minutes, it is exceedingly difficult to determine accurately the nature of the early Amish regulations or "discipline." It is known that occasional gatherings of Amish ministers were held which were attended by bishops, ministers and deacons from various Amish congregations, but for a long time no known records of these gatherings had been discovered. Recently manuscript copies of a number of such conferences of earlier times have come to light. Some have come into the possession of the Mennonite Historical Library at Goshen College, while others have been found in pri-

vate hands. It appears that these copies had been made by Amish bishops who attended the conferences and who desired copies of the records of the work of the conferences for their own use. Their later successors made new copies as the original manuscripts wore out. Records of these conferences however never became available to the general membership of the Amish church.

An early European conference discipline of this sort, dating back to 1568, was printed in German and English in the very first number of the Mennonite Quarterly Review for January, 1927. In the present issue of the REVIEW English translations of three early American Amish conferences disciplines of 1809, 1837 and 1865 are presented. The translations are made from an old manuscript in possession of the Mennonite Historical Library at Goshen College, which forms a part of a manuscript booklet containing copies of European disciplines of 1568, 1607, and 1688, as well as the later Pennsylvania disciplines of 1809 and 1837, and an Ohio discipline of 1865. All three of these disciplines are herewith reproduced in English translation.

## I. THE DISCIPLINE OF 1809

The location of the meeting-place of the conference which adopted the discipline of 1809 cannot be definitely determined. The same is true of the location of the congregations whose ministers took part in the conference. However, it can be shown that the conference included the Amish congregations of Pennsylvania only and that it was probably held in the Berks-Chester-Lancaster County settlement. In 1809 there were only two Amish settlements outside of the Berks-Chester-Lancaster County original Amish settlements, and these were the settlement near Belleville in Mifflin County in central Pennsylvania and the settlement in Somerset County in Southwestern Pennsylvania. There were no Amish settlements at this time outside of Pennsylvania. The first settlement in Ohio, the one near Sugarcreek in Tuscarawas and Holmes County was just being established in the same year, 1809. The title of the 1809 discipline states that it was drawn up at a conference between the ministers of the "lower" and the "upper" districts ("zwischen den Diener im Land unten und oben"). Probably "unten" or "lower" refers to the original settlements in the Berks-Chester-Lancaster region while the "oben" or upper territory includes the congregations in Mifflin and Somerset counties. This interpretation is supported by a note on another copy of the discipline in private hands which states that "unten" refers to eastern Pennsylvania. Since the older settlements were larger and strong-

er and the newer settlements scarcely more than a few decades old and not large, it is safe to assume that the conference was held "unten im Land", or "down east."

The text of the translated discipline follows.

Pennsylvania October 17, 1809

Articles of agreement, discussed and decided by the ministers of the upper and lower districts.

*First*: That all those of our members who leave us to join other churches shall be treated as apostate persons according to the word of the Lord and his ordinance, and shall be separated and shall be recognized as subjects for the ban.

*Second*: Permission shall be given to "admonish" at a funeral in our brotherhood, but not outside.

*Third*: We have no basis in scripture for excluding any member from taking part in the council of the church.

*Fourth*: That shunning shall be exercised toward banned persons according to the teaching of Christ and the apostles with respect to eating and drinking, life and work ("Handel und Wandel") until they are again received by the church.

*Fifth*: Anyone who transgresses the rule of shunning in weakness or ignorance can be reconciled by confession to the church that he has erred; whoever transgresses intentionally but is not stubborn about it when admonished, can be reconciled by a "full" ("hoechst") confession but whoever stubbornly refuses to hearken to admonition shall be excommunicated from the church.

*Sixth*: Whoever swears an oath knowingly and frivolously shall be excommunicated; but whoever swears out of inexperience shall be required to make a "full" confession.

*Seventh*: In regard to cutting of the hair and beard, it is decided that no one shall be accepted as a member in the church unless he manifests the full fruit of obedience, and all those who are already in the church and are not willing to be obedient to this regulation shall be dealt with according to Christian discipline ("Ordnung").

*Eighth*: It is decided that jury service shall not be tolerated or permitted for brethren in the church.

*Ninth*: Proud dresses, proud trousers, hats, and combs in the hair, and similar worldly clothing shall not be tolerated in the church. [Hats and combs were prohibited for women.—Ed.]

*In conclusion*: All the above articles shall be observed and practised according to Christian discipline and patience.

Acknowledged and signed by us

Michael Lapp
Johannes Blanck
David Yoder
Christel Stoltzfus
Johannes König
Christian Yoder
*Christian Hertzler
Hannes Yoder
Hannes Beiler
*Christian König
Christian Zug
Joseph Kurtz
Hannes Lapp
Peter Blanck
Christian Miller
Christian Stutzman
Jacob Miller
Daniel Zug
Christian Zug
*Isaac Yoder
*Jacob Stutzman
*Daniel Miller
*Abraham Müller

## NOTE

The list of signers to the discipline varies somewhat in the two copies of the original which were available for comparison. The one in the possession of the Mennonite Historical Library is somewhat shorter, having only 16 names, while the copy in private hands has 23 names. The names not found in the shorter list are indicated by an asterisk. The name of Christian Zug is repeated in the longer list, although there is no means of determining whether the repetition is merely an error or whether there were two distinct Amish ministers at the conference bearing the same name. The copy in private hands seems to have been signed in autograph by those present. A note on this private manuscript by J. F. Swartzendruber states that it was written by his great-grandfather Christian Yoder, bishop of the Glade Congregation in Somerset County, and that it was signed in autograph by all the ministers present. If this is the case then the longer list is the correct one.

## THE DISCIPLINE OF 1837

The discipline of 1837 was drawn up at a conference of ministers of the three congregations in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, as is indicated in the heading of the discipline where the three are named as "River" (Casselman River), "Glade", and "Conemaugh." The first congregation was in the vicinity of Springs, Pennsylvania, and Grantsville, Maryland; the second was near Somerset and Stoyestown, while the third was some thirty miles distant near Johnstown.

The text of the translated discipline follows.

Pennsylvania, March 18, 1837

Concerning the Conference of the Ministry of the Three Congregations, River, Glade, and Conemaugh. Decisions as follows:

*First*: It is noted that decline has set in because the ordinance of God in the matter of the ban is greatly neglected. Decided that separation and shunning are to be practiced toward all disobedient ones without regard of person, whether man or woman.

*Second*: It is noted that there is awful pride in clothing, namely with respect to silken neck-cloths (Halstuecher) worn around the neck, so that mothers tie silken neck-cloths on their children, and make high collars on their children's shirts and clothing, and the mothers permit their daughters to wear men's hats and go with them to church or other places, or that even the mothers have them themselves. Decided that such things shall not be among us.

*Third*: Decided that there shall be no display in houses, namely when houses are built, or painted with various colors, or filled with showy furniture, namely with wooden, porcelain, or glass utensils (dishes), and having cupboards and mirrors hung on the wall, and such things.

*Fourth*: Decided that worldly offices are not to be held, namely, serving on juries, or holding elections to elect officials.

*Fifth*: Decided that excessive driving of sleighs or other vehicles is not to be, and also that vehicles are not to be painted with two colors, as has already occurred too much.

*Sixth*: Decided that those who marry outside are no longer to be received again so lightly into fellowship, unless they bring their marriage partners with them into Christian discipline, and are received after true repentance and change of heart has been shown.

*Seventh*: Decided that when two persons marry, both of whom are outside the church, and they desire to be received into fellowship, the ministers shall make plain to them the obligations of Christian marriage according to the ordinance of God, and when they are received they shall promise before God and the brotherhood to fulfil the obligations of Christian marriage according to Christian ordinance.

*Eighth*: Decided that the Sabbath is to be kept holy, that business is to be conducted on the six days of the week according to the ordinance, and Sunday is to be kept to the honor of God, except in case of emergency.

*Ninth*: With regard to the excesses practiced among the youth, namely that the youth take the liberty to sleep or lie together without any fear or shame, such things shall not be tolerated at all. And when it takes place with the knowledge of the parents and something bad happens on account of it, the parents shall not go unpunished.

*Tenth*: Decided that the tailors are not to make new or worldly styles of clothing for members of the church, but are to follow the old style and such as is indicated by the ministers and older people of the church.

*Eleventh*: Likewise, the cabinetmakers are not to make such proud kinds of furniture and not decorate them with such loud or gay ("scheckich") colors.

*Twelfth*: In conclusion, all the above-mentioned articles are to be observed according to Christian discipline and patience.

Signed by us, ministers of the three above-named congregations.

*Conemaugh Congregation*
Jacob Oesch
Christian Miller
Christian Nissli
Joseph Miller
Jonas Yoder

*Glade Congregation*
Christian Yoder, Senior
Christian Yoder, Junior
Abraham Miller
Jacob Swartzendruber
David Yoder

*River Congregation*
Benedict Miller
Jost Yoder
Hannes Gingrich

NOTE: Apparently, so far as can be determined, the names of the signers to the discipline are arranged according to the congregation to which they belong.

## THE DISCIPLINE OF 1865

The third discipline found in the manuscript mentioned above is one drawn up at a conference held in Holmes County, Ohio, on June 1, 1865. This conference, according to the number and the residence of the signers, must have been a general conference of a large number of congregations, including communities in western Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Ontario. The decisions of this conference were written down in more complete form than

the decisions of the two earlier conferences, but are not arranged quite so clearly as separate resolutions. Apparently the one who wrote down the minutes of the conference cast his report in the form of a personal statement directed to his co-laborers. It is possible that this was an "Old Order" Amish Conference held as a counter action to the progressive Amish conferences which were held annually from 1862 on.

The text of the translated discipline follows.

Holmes County, Ohio, June 1, 1865.

My dear brethren and sisters in the Lord, I would wish that the dear Lord may direct us by his good and holy spirit, that we may hold fast in the truth which we have accepted unto a blessed end, that we may not do that which is harmful to our salvation ("Seeligkeit") and contrary to the word of the Lord, and may help to uproot every plant which the heavenly father has not planted. However, in the present time there is becoming manifest a spirit which tries to give the impression that this or that is of no importance and has no value for good or for bad. It is for us to consider whether this spirit is from God, or whether it is a spirit of error. So we and the ministers named below were gathered together in the name of the Lord and became agreed on the following points.

*First*: When such things become manifest which we recognize to lead to pride and display and lead away from God, and are harmful to the church, they are to be rooted out, and are not to be tolerated in the church.

*Next*: Decided not to allow attendance at worldly conventions, or fairs, or yearly fairs, or to take part in them, or to enroll our material possessions in companies (insurance?), or to put up lightning rods on our buildings. Likewise, decided not to allow gayly-colored ("scheckich"), striped, or flowered clothing made according to the fashions of the world, or parting the hair of man or woman after the worldly styles, or cutting the beard according to worldly styles, or carrying hidden on one's person photographic pictures of human likenesses or hanging them on the wall to look at in our houses. Likewise it is not allowed to wear overcoats made of oilcloth or rubber or other overcoats made according to the worldly styles, likewise false shirt-bosoms, likewise merchandising after the worldly fashion, for the Saviour drove such out of the temple. Likewise, luxurious vehicles according to the world's pride and vanity.

Also it is considered altogether improper to hold the council of the congregation with open doors, and permit outside persons to sit in the council, but council is only to be held with the members of the church. Also it is considered good that the ministers go into the council room ("Abrath") before the meeting, as our forefathers did, and we are not satisfied when it is omitted. The apostle says, "Remember your teachers, who proclaimed to you the gospel." We also consider that spiritual songs and spiritual tunes are to be used in the worship in the congregations and not notes, or fast tunes ("Spring-Weisen") which belong to the world.

Also we consider it to be improper for a Christian to mix the creatures of God, such as horse and donkey, by which mules arise, because the Lord God did not create such in the beginning. Likewise we do not consider it edifying for members of the church to occupy worldly offices, especially those in which force is used, and military positions, or criminal offices. Also, it is considered improper to decorate the houses with all sorts of unnecessary and luxurious things such as gayly-colored ("scheckich") walls, window curtains and large mirrors, and pictures and such things.

The above-mentioned points we consider to be right and good and in accordance with the word of the Lord and our confession of faith, and as we have been taught and instructed by our forefathers, and we intend to stay by the same as we promised when we were received into the church by baptism. And all those who confess the same with us, and work together, and manifest the same by deeds, we are willing and ready to recognize as brethren and sisters and to give them the hand and kiss of fellowship, and to serve with them in word and teaching, and to maintain spiritual unity with them. For the Saviour says "Whoever doeth the will of my father in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." And the gate is pictured to us as strait and the road as narrow, but is not therefore ever closed, but stands open for all repentant souls, and as it says in Luke 14,33, "No one who is not willing to deny everything can be my disciple."

Decided and signed by us, as follows:

*Holmes County, Ohio*

Levi Miller
Noah Miller
Moses Bitsche
Elias Miller
Christian Schlabach

*Middletown (Ohio)*

Moses J. Miller
Christian D. Yoder
Moses H. Miller
Solomon Miller

*Dauti Creek*
(Holmes Co., Ohio)

David A. Troyer
Daniel D. Miller
Shem J. Miller
Jeremiah Miller

*Peru, Indiana*

Johannes Schmucker
Moses Hershberger

*Bremen, Marshall Co., Ind.*

David H. Hochstetler
Johannes J. Schlabach

*Martin's Creek*
(Holmes Co., Ohio)

Jacob Yoder

*Casselman's River*
(Somerset Co., Pa.)

Joel Bitsche
Daniel Hershberger

*Lagrange (Indiana)*

Joseph Miller
Tobias Yoder
David D. Miller

*Sugar Creek*
(Holmes Co., Ohio)

Moses Wenger
Peter Bitsche
Jacob J. Miller
David D. Troyer

*Upper Canada*
(Waterloo Co., Ont.)

Johan Jantzi
Johan Bender
Johan Gascho

*Glade*
(Somerset Co., Pa.)

Abner Yoder

*Wayne Co., Ohio*

Immanuel Hochstetler

*Barns (Berntz)*
(Elkhart, Ind.)

Johannes L. Miller
Joseph Hochstetler